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Congress of the United States
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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

March 4, 2022

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Herbert Clark Hoover Building
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

In October, I wrote to express support for Activation Capital, an applicant on behalf of an extensive regional coalition, for grant funding under Phase 2 of the Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) to accelerate the growth of the emerging Advanced Pharmaceutical Manufacturing and R&D Cluster in Virginia's Richmond/Petersburg region.

In the months since, I have witnessed the tremendous, continued progress and gathering momentum, as so many stakeholders work together across a region centered within my Congressional District. They have shown the capacity for boundaryless collaborations in the development of the permanent cluster organization, as well as in the makeup of the coalition, industry leaders and partners involved in this BBB Regional Challenge Application. This application by Activation Capital and the component projects typifies the regional, collaborative, planful, and selective approach the Build Back Better Regional Challenge seeks to encourage and support.

Many areas within the Richmond/Petersburg area are historically distressed and have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbating unemployment and depressing income. I have observed the intentional choices that are being made to ensure that the investments in this emerging cluster deliver on a deep commitment to equitable impact as seen through the projects like an integrated rural and urban workforce capability building program, a teaching and research capabilities collaboration program between anchor universities, VCU and VSU; and designing educational development pathways for hi-tech, high skill careers that meet industry needs. The growth of the cluster will help to revitalize the economy and bring many good jobs in this emerging, hi-tech industry, increasing the region's resilience to downturns and disruptions. The unique focus of the BBBRC on resilience and equity will assure the impact is lasting and shared among all communities, especially those historically excluded.

I am proud that this diverse coalition emerging in my district is leading the way in this critical work for the nation. Again, I ask for your full and fair consideration of the BBBRC application package from Virginia Biotechnology Research Partnership Authority dba Activation Capital and its coalition.

Sincerely,

A. Donald McEachin

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Member of Congress